Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ELECTRIC LIGHTS' GOLDEN JUBILEE

LEONARD W. WAHLSTROM

"Peace has its heroes no less than war." When the opportunity presents itself so conspicuously as in the case of the fiftieth anniversary of the invention of the incandescent light, the School would be negligent indeed if proper honor were not given to the occasion and to the inventor, Thomas A. Edison. The eyes of the world were focused on the white-haired "Wizard of Menlo Park," whose painstaking experiments had brought more abundant light to all civilization.

What better plan to celebrate this event than in the morning assembly of the whole School? This was not a matter for a single group of pupils, but all grades and all ages were concerned and could contribute to this exercise. At a morning exercise a week or two in advance of October 21, 1929, the entire School was told of a proposed exercise to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the invention of incandescent light by Thomas A. Edison, and everyone was invited to contribute specimens of early forms of lighting for the exhibit. It was found that interest was already at a high pitch, due to the extensive newspaper and magazine publicity which the Jubilee had received. Consequently there was no difficulty in obtaining pupils to take part.

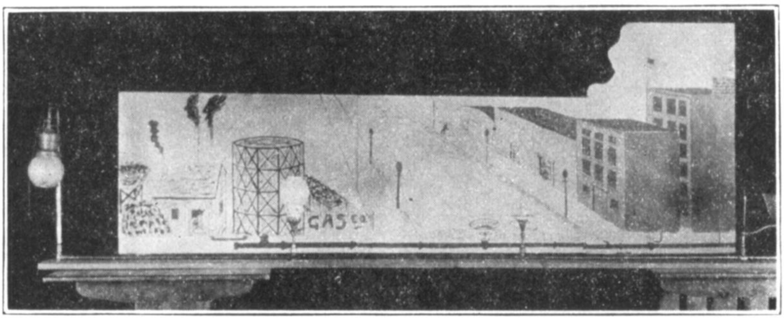
The exhibit of early forms of lighting proved to be a most interesting part of the exercise. This included the following, arranged somewhat in historical sequence:

1. Candle molds
2. Whale-oil lamps made of pewter
3. Early form of railroad lantern, burning lard oil
4. Replica of early Roman lamp with four wicks and center oil reservoir, for table or hanging use
5. Copy of early Greek lamp—made by fourth-grade children in clay
6. Acetylene bicycle lamp
7. Miner's acetylene lamp
8. Miner's electric lamp
9. Kerosene lamps—metal, glass
10. Kerosene student-lamp (familiar a generation ago)
11. Early form of kerosene auto-lamps

One pupil brought an heirloom in the form of a pewter base for a kerosene lamp which had been used at her grandmother's wedding fifty years ago. The pewter whale-oil lamps were over a hundred years old, and even the light used in the "days of '49" was illustrated by means of a candle stuck in the neck of a bottle.

Occupying a place of honor in the display was of course the replica of Edison's first incandescent lamp, with a colored print of Edison as a companion piece. The entire display was on exhibit in the main hall of the School for several days previous to and on the day of the exercise.

To impress further the event on the minds of the pupils, the main hall corridor to the auditorium and the auditorium itself was dimly lighted by kerosene lamps and candles when the pupils assembled for the exercise. The day was cloudy, and this heightened the effect. It was found necessary, however, to make use of a certain amount of electric light during the exercise. After the exercise the contrast was marked, for then the pupils found the halls and corridors brightly lighted by the customary electric illumination.



Transparent Exhibit of a Street Scene

Among the exhibits and demonstrations used on the stage during the exercise were included specimens of the various types on display in the front hall. A large chart had been prepared in color, showing the progress in forms of lamps from the pine knot of primitive man to the modern forms of electric illumination.

A gas line had been installed on which were outlets with lava and aluminum tips showing the open gas flame used for lighting, and the incandescent gas mantle light, both the upright form and the inverted.

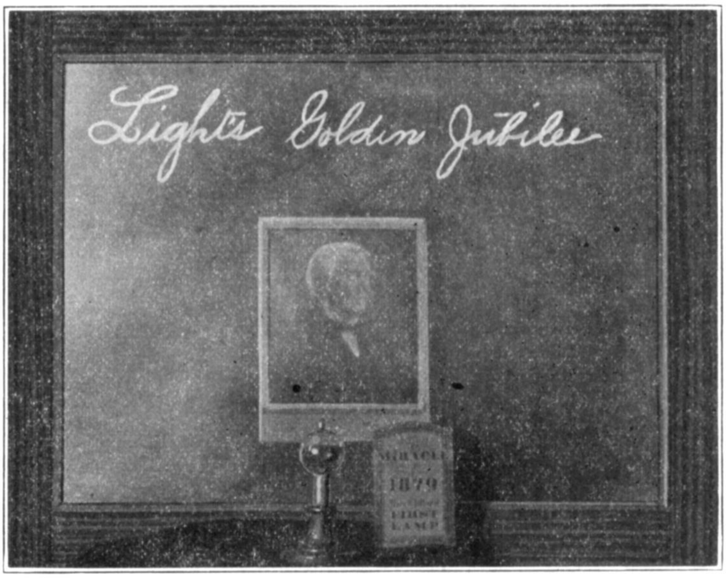
A transparent exhibit of a street scene showing the piping of gas from the gas plant to the buildings and street lamps brought forth favorable comment as did also the experiment in which an eighth grade boy generated a small amount of gas from crushed coal.[1]

A second exercise was provided at our request by the Commonwealth Edison Company who supplied a speaker to give a talk illustrated with excellent lantern slides covering the early forms of lighting, and important events in the life of Edison, and his discovery of the incandescent light. The talk proved very satisfactory both in content and in method of presentation. Introducing an outside speaker in this way served to emphasize the world-wide importance of this event and gave added prestige to the efforts of the School.

---

[1] The stenographic report of this excellent exercise is omitted because of similarity to the preceding article, though the use of high school as well as elementary school children permitted more complicated forms of lighting to be shown, as indicated in this report.

Seldom has an opportunity presented itself in which the entire School from first grader to senior high school pupil could have such an active part and so keen an interest. The admiration and feeling aroused by properly honoring men and events which eminently signalize the progress of mankind has a powerful influence on the growing pupil, especially the early adolescent, in whom hero-worship is strong.



Thomas A. Edison and His First Incandescent Lamp

Such emotions must be aroused by worth-while events and outstanding characters.

The effect of such an exercise is particularly valuable when the occasion and the hero who is honored is of the living, breathing present. Such an event cannot but emphasize in the pupil's mind the rapid progress of civilization and the part which the present generation must have in this movement. It will help them to realize that they must receive the torch of progress from the hands of the generation which is passing and carry it steadily forward into the future, so that civilization may constantly receive light, and that more abundantly.